



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Townsville, Youth Crime**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.25 pm): ‘How disgusting is it that we have to wait for someone to be assaulted or killed?’ Those are the exact words of Townsville resident Taleisha on 12 February 2020 at the Jubilee Bowls Club in Townsville. Among the hundreds of people listening to Taleisha were the member for Morayfield and police minister, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Townsville. They talked a big game that day. They talked about the tough action they were going to take, how they were going to lay down the law and lock up these juvenile offenders. Here we are, 12 months later, still talking about the same issue. Isn’t it tragic that over a year later, Taleisha’s prediction has tragically come true—not once, not twice but three times? Five people have died in Townsville, three people have died in Alexandra Hills, and nothing has changed.

According to the Police Service’s online crime map, in the year to 22 February 842 cars have been stolen and 3,074 premises have been broken into in the Townsville local government area. That is a disgrace. Everyday people who are going about their lives are having their cars stolen and their houses broken into. Are they angry? You better believe it! I get calls every day from those residents—from the owners of those vehicles, from those occupiers who have had their houses broken into and their cars stolen and torched.

I refer to the battling single mum of three kids who could not afford to insure her car, which was last year stolen and burnt. How does she take the kids to school? How does she do the shopping on a weekend? She is now forced to beg, borrow and do whatever she can to get her kids to school and to go and get the groceries using public transport because of the actions of these juvenile offenders. Just this morning we have seen more chaos in Townsville. As I stand here, right this minute, the Bruce Highway is closed and at least one person has been hospitalised. Multiple vehicles have been damaged and a manhunt is currently underway.

This is Queensland, not Mogadishu, for goodness sake! This sort of thing is happening every single day of the week right throughout Queensland, yet those opposite will come in here and talk about their five-point plan and how it is making a difference. I can assure them that it is not going anywhere near far enough to address the issue of juvenile crime in Queensland. Government members should try going to Townsville and telling people there that their plan is working. I can assure government members that it is a dismal failure and that people are sick and tired of calling for action from this government. They are sick and tired of listening to the rhetoric and the talk that they are going to get tough on these offenders. They want to see some real action. They want to see some real commitment.

Let me tell members about some of these recidivist, hardcore juvenile offenders that we hear about. They do not care whether they live or die. The detectives who are locking these kids up on a daily basis will tell members that. They have no fear, and that should concern all of us. Members should look at the time. Parents will shortly be going to get their kids from school, but the Bruce Highway is

closed because these idiots, these young offenders, are tearing up and down the highway in stolen cars and crashing those stolen cars, putting more innocent lives at risk. How many more people in this state will lose their lives because of the actions of these juvenile offenders?

It has to stop. We have to get tough on this. When we hear that juvenile offenders are doing burnouts in police station car parks, we know that we have a problem. They steal multiple vehicles and go in convoy around the streets of Townsville taunting police. The latest craze is to steal a car and ram a police car because then they prove themselves somehow. That should be ringing alarm bells right throughout this state and definitely should be ringing alarm bells for those on the other side of the chamber. We could have amended the legislation and made breach of bail an offence in one hour today. We were prepared to support it. Where were those opposite when the opportunity presented itself?

*(Time expired)*